



## **The Rail Worker and Community Safety Act**

### One-Page Summary

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In the last year, the nation has witnessed over 1,000 train derailments, including a catastrophic derailment in East Palestine that poisoned an entire town. The Rail Worker and Community Safety Act seeks to address the underlying causes of train derailments across the country, including the implementation of Precision Scheduled Railroading.

Precision Scheduled Railroading (PSR) is a scheme created by railroad carriers to increase profit no matter the cost and puts the safety of all our communities at risk. The PSR model is built on decreasing staff, worsening working conditions, and longer trains (among other policies) which results in record profits for the executives and shareholders of Class I rail carriers. PSR puts profits over people and threatens the safety of our communities and workers. The tragedy in East Palestine, for example, was caused by a variety of safety failings which can be linked directly to PSR. With fewer workers, longer trains, and lagging safety measures, the risk of derailments – especially toxic ones like in East Palestine – rises significantly.

The Rail Worker and Community Safety Act makes much-needed improvements to federal rail safety regulations. Some key provisions include:

- Mandates a two-person crew on all Class I railroads.
- All-encompassing changes to how, when and where hazardous materials can be transported in order to ensure the safe transport of hazardous materials and that first responders have the information they need when responding to a derailment.
- Mandates the creation of a reporting structure for close call incidents, similar to how airlines report close call incidents, so problems are resolved before derailments happen.
- Increases funding for rail safety inspectors to help keep our workers and communities safe and address key retention issues.
- Mandates regulations regarding the use of wayside detection technologies, which are currently not regulated by the federal government.

The Rail Worker and Community Safety Act also codifies paid sick leave for rail workers. This bill would require rail carriers to allow their workers to earn up to 7 days (56 hours) of paid sick leave each year. Rail carriers would be prohibited from discriminating or retaliating against employees for using their accrued paid sick leave. Paid sick leave guaranteed by this bill would be available for use related to physical or mental illness or injury; preventive or diagnostic care; caring for a child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, or other relative; attending a child's school meeting; experiences of domestic violence or sexual assault; and more.